

REMARKS

In section 2a of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 31-40 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Davies patent in view of the Humpleman patent.

The Davies patent shows an adaptive remote controller 100 in Figure 1 that sends a control signal 110 to a target device 120 so that the target device 120 performs a function. The remote controller 100 may be configured to send the control signal 110 to any number of target devices 120. In Figure 2, the Davies patent shows a remote controller 200 that comprises a user control input 210, a detector 220, and a user interface 230. The user control input 210 receives a user input and issues a control signal to a target device. The detector 220 detects if the remote controller 200 is within a target device feedback range. The user interface 230 provides feedback as to whether the control signal was successfully sent to and executed by the target device.

Figure 3 of the Davies patent shows an alternative remote controller 300 that comprises a user control input 310, a detector 320, and a user interface 330. The user control input 310 comprises an infrared

system 340 and a radio frequency system 350. The infrared system 340 sends a signal to the target device when the remote controller 300 is within the target device feedback range. The radio frequency system 350 sends radio frequency signals to the target device when the remote controller 300 is not within the target device feedback range.

A toggling mechanism 360 of the remote controller 300 switches between the infrared system 340 and the radio frequency system 350. The detector 320 determines whether the remote controller 310 is within the target device feedback range and activates the toggling mechanism 360 as necessary.

An example of an application of the remote controller 300 is a user attempting to turn on a television set. The remote controller 300 transmits an infrared signal to the television set when the user is holding the remote controller 300 in the same room as the television set. Feedback as to the successful execution of a function in response to the transmitted signal is provided in the television set.

However, the remote controller 300 transmits a radio frequency signal when the user is in a room that is different than the room where the television set is

located. Feedback relevant to the execution of a particular function corresponding to the transmitted signal is received by the remote controller via radio frequency communication and is provided to the user of the remote controller 300.

The target device feedback range may be an unobstructed line of sight between the remote controller and the target device, or the target device feedback range may be an audible hearing distance between the remote controller and the target device, or the target device feedback range may be a definite distance of ten meters.

Figure 4 of the Davies patent shows a flow diagram of a process of transmitting a signal from a remote controller to a target device. At 410, a signal is transmitted from a remote controller to a target device to perform a function on the target device. At 420, a determination is made as to whether the remote controller is within a target device feedback range. At 430, the remote controller provides feedback as to whether the function was executed by the target device if the remote controller is not within the target device feedback range.

Figure 5 of the Davies patent shows an alternative process of transmitting a signal from a remote controller to a target device. At 510, a detector in the remote controller determines whether the remote controller is within a target device feedback range. If the remote controller is not within the target device feedback range, a radio frequency signal is transmitted from the remote controller at 520 to the target device. At 525, the remote controller provides feedback as to whether the control signal was received by the target device and the function was executed by the target device. At 535, the target device also provides feedback.

If the remote controller is within the target device feedback range, an infrared control signal is transmitted at 530 from the remote controller to the target device. At 535, the target device provides feedback.

Switching between infrared and radio frequency signals this may be manually performed by the user or may be automatically performed.

The Humpleman patent discloses a home network 100 having a serial bus 114 that electronically interconnects a digital television 102, a satellite

receiver 104, a DVD 108, a VCR 110, and a security system 120. The digital television 102 provides the human interface for the home network 100 by employing browser technology to allow users to control and command the other devices over the home network 100. Alternatively, this interface may be provided by a remote control.

This human interface includes a device link page 402 that is shown in Figure 5 and that contains buttons 406 corresponding to the home devices connected to the home network 100. Each button 406 is associated with a hypertext link to the top-level home page of the corresponding home device. As shown in Figure 6, the buttons 406 may be in the form of icons and, as shown in Figure 7, the buttons 406 may be arranged in groups.

A session page 702 (Figure 8) is generated as an interface displayed on the digital television 102. The session page 702 allows the user to command and control the home devices that are connected to the home network 100 in order to perform various functions and/or services such as starting play of a movie, programming a satellite receiver, and recording a television program.

The session page 702 contains frames 704, 706 and 708. The frame 704 contains a device link page 710 that contains device buttons 712 for the home devices

connected to the home network 100. As shown in Figure 10, if the user selects the device button 712 for Dad's TV, the top-level home page 804 for Dad's TV is displayed in the frame 706. If the user then selects a second device button, such as the device button 712 corresponding to Jim's DVD, the top-level home page 904 for Jim's DVD is displayed in the frame 708 (Figure 11). In this case, Dad's TV and Jim's DVD, having been selected, can communicate with each other to set up and perform the desired service as selected by the user through use of the options displayed on the home pages 804 and 904.

Independent claim 31 is directed to a television control system comprising a host device and a plurality of dispersed televisions. The host device has a host processor, a host receiver, and a host transmitter. The host processor controls the host transmitter to transmit command signals, and the host processor processes confirmation signals received by the host receiver. Each of the plurality of dispersed televisions has a television processor, a television receiver, and a television transmitter. Each television processor processes the command signals received by a corresponding television receiver, and each television

processor controls a corresponding television transmitter to transmit the confirmation signals upon performance of functions commanded by the command signals. The host processor determines which televisions do not transmit the confirmation signals.

Neither the Davies patent nor the Humpleman patent discloses or suggests a controller that determines which of the televisions fails to transmit a confirmation signal. The Davies patent discloses that the television provides feedback that it has executed a function but provides the remote controller no way to identify the television. The Humpleman patent does not disclose any mechanism to provide confirmation.

Accordingly, the combination of the Davies patent and the Humpleman patent does not suggest the invention of independent claim 31 to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Therefore, independent claim 31 is patentable over the Davies patent in view of the Humpleman patent.

Moreover, in the rejection of claim 31, the Examiner recognizes that the Davies patent does not disclose the control of plural televisions by a remote controller. The Davies patent does state that the remote controller may be configured to send its control signal

to any number of target devices. However, one skilled in the art will understand that this statement, in context, merely means that the remote controller can be a universal remote controller that can control a television, or a VCR, or a DVD, etc. The Davies patent does not suggest that the remote controller can control multiple televisions.

The Examiner states that the use of more than one television is notoriously old. Certainly, a consumer may have more than one television in the home. However, it is equally well known that each television has its own remote controller. Neither the Examiner nor the Davies patent suggests that all televisions in the home are controlled by the same remote controller.

The Examiner relies on the Humpleman patent for a suggestion that several televisions can be remotely controlled. However, the Humpleman patent does not establish a need for transmitting confirmation signals from the plural televisions (or, for that matter, from a single television) to the remote controller. Likewise, the Davies patent does not establish a need for providing confirmation signals from the plural televisions to the remote controller. Indeed, no existing system

establishes a need for providing confirmation signals from the plural televisions to the remote controller.

Accordingly, neither the Davies patent nor the Humpleman patent suggests to one of ordinary skill an arrangement in which confirmation signals are provided by multiple televisions back to a remote controller.

Therefore, neither the Davies patent nor the Humpleman patent suggests the invention of independent claim 31 to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Consequently, for this reason also, independent claim 31 is not unpatentable over the Davies patent in view of the Humpleman patent.

Moreover, the Examiner suggests that the reason for combining the Davies patent and the Humpleman patent is to provide "the user(s) the ability to control all the television/target devices the user(s) has/have access to with a single remote control." However, the Examiner is in error in relying on this reason for combining the Davies patent and the Humpleman patent. The Humpleman patent already discloses the control of multiple devices from a single controller (such as a DTV). There is no need, therefore, to combine the Humpleman patent with any other reference in order to control multiple devices with a single remote control.

Accordingly, the Examiner has established no suggestion that would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the Davies patent and the Humpleman patent so as to meet the limitations of independent claim 31.

Independent claim 42 is directed to a television signal transmission method comprising transmitting a command signal from a host device to each of a plurality of dispersed televisions directing the televisions to perform a function, receiving at the host device confirmation signals from the plurality of televisions, and determining at the host device which of the televisions fails to transmit a confirmation signal.

As discussed above, neither the Davies patent nor the Humpleman patent discloses or suggests determining at a host device which of the televisions fails to transmit a confirmation signal. Moreover, the Shintani patent likewise does not disclose or suggest determining at a host device which of the televisions fails to transmit a confirmation signal.

Accordingly, the combination of the Davies patent, the Humpleman patent, and the Shintani patent does not suggest the invention of independent claim 42 to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Therefore, independent claim 42 is patentable over the Davies patent in view of the Humpleman patent and further ion view of the Shintani patent.

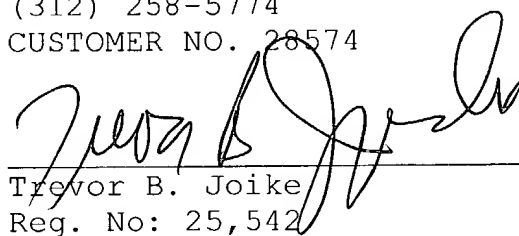
CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is clear that the claims of the present application patentably distinguish over the art applied by the Examiner. Accordingly, allowance of these claims and issuance of the above captioned patent application are respectfully requested.

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November 19, 2004